

Message Text

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ACTION OPR-02

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3596

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ASMARA 0825

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AREC ET

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR DEPARTMENT ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING
SUPPORT TO CONGEN ASMARA

REF: A. ASMARA 669 B. ASMARA 748 C. ASMARA 791

1. FOOD SITUATION IN ASMARA AS REPORTED REFTELS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT. AT PRESENT SEVERAL ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS ARE UNAVAILABLE IN ASMARA AND OTHERS ARE AVAILABLE ON SPORADIC BASIS OR AT EXCESSIVE COST. THOSE ITEMS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY NOT AVAILABLE INCLUDE WHEAT FLOUR, BREAD, SUGAR, COFFEE, AND MOST FRUITS. THOSE ITEMS WHICH ARE DECREASINGLY AVAILABLE ON SPORADIC BASIS INCLUDE EGGS, MILK, BEEF, FISH, BUTTER, AND VEGETABLES. THOSE ITEMS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE ONLY AT EXCESSIVE COST INCLUDE PAPER PRODUCTS, SOAPS AND DETERGENTS, CANNED MEATS AND CANNED FRUITS. THESE ITEMS ARE SCARCE AND WILL NOT BE REPLENISHED AS ALL IMPORTS INTO ERITREA HAVE CEASED. ON SEPT. 17, EPMG INSTITUTED FOOD RATIONING PROGRAM FOR WHEAT, SORGHUM, TEFF, AND SUGAR.

2. IN VIEW OF THIS INCREASINGLY ACUTE SITUATION, WHICH ALL INFORMED LOCAL OBSERVERS EXPECT TO BECOME MORE CRITICAL

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IN THE NEAR TERM, CONGEN REQUESTS DEPARTMENT APPROVE

STANDARDIZED PROCEDURE BY WHICH CONGEN STAFF COULD RECEIVE FOOD AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FROM MAAG COMMISSARY IN ADDIS BY COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORT. THIS SUPPORT COULD ONLY BE PROVIDED BY AIR, AS ROAD TRAVEL IS PROLONGED, ARDUOUS, AND STRICTLY CONTROLLED BY EPMG. COMMERCIAL AIR WILL BE NECESSARY AS MAAG NOT CAPABLE OF PROVIDING SERVICE EXCEPT ON EXTREME EMERGENCY BASIS. IT IS MY OPINION THAT IF REGULAR SUPPLY OF FOOD ITEMS TO CONSULATE STAFF IS NOT MAINTAINED WITHOUT EXCESSIVE COST TO INDIVIDUALS, IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SUSTAIN MORALE, WHICH IS ALREADY STRAINED BY (A) STRINGENT DUSK-TO-DAWN CURFEW, (B) SPECIFIC INSURGENT THREAT AGAINST AMERICAN PRESENCE IN ERITREA, (C) FREQUENT OUTBREAKS OF FIGHTING IN AND AROUND ASMARA, AND (D) ISOLATION. THEREFORE REQUEST DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR PAYMENT AIR FREIGHT OF ADEQUATE COMMISSARY SUPPLIES FOR CONGEN STAFF.

3. SIMILAR SITUATION EXISTS FOR SUPPORT OF KAGNEW. AS THERE ARE CURRENTLY 41 U.S. MILITARY AND DOD-CONTRACT PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO KAGNEW, PLUS EIGHT DEPENDENTS, SUPPORT PROCEDURE SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED WITH DOD.
SHERRY

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